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ABSTRACT

Public libraries are a key access point for community-based education for lifelong learners. Libraries link independent learners, materials, programs, and other community agencies, and provide a common touchstone for all segments of the population. The public library and its mission support lifelong learning through the acquisition and organization of materials, reference and information services, programming, and outreach. In order to provide effective service for older learners, the librarian should have a three-tiered knowledge base: (1) core knowledge of library and information science; (2) knowledge of public library service; and (3) knowledge for specialized library service to older adults. Due to weaknesses in the structures of formal education, continuing education, and dissemination mechanisms, there are gaps in the knowledge base that serves as the foundation for lifelong learning. Suggested areas of research include advocacy, structures and mechanisms for education and knowledge dissemination to service providers, and strategies and methods for planning and providing educational services to older learners. The approach to studying and planning lifelong learning opportunities should be multidisciplinary, stress continuity, underscore interrelatedness of all segments of the community, be inclusive, and emphasize access to information. Two appendices provide a statement of knowledge and skill expectations for entry level public librarians, and guidelines for library service to older adults. (Contains 15 references.) (MAS)

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Public Libraries, Lifelong Learning, and Older Adults: Background and Recommendations

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Connie Van Fleet, M.L.I.S., Ph.D.

Introduction

Public libraries are a key access point for community-based education for lifelong learners. Community based and locally supported, libraries link independent learners, materials, programs, and other community agencies, and provide a common touchstone for all segments of the population.

The Public Library Mission: Support For Lifelong Learning

Public libraries were founded and continue to serve as premier institutions for lifelong learning. The American public library is committed to service to all individuals, regardless of educational level, socio-economic status, or age. Its multifaceted informational, educational, social, and cultural roles provide an ideal philosophical foundation for learning opportunities for older adults. The provision of information, materials and services covering a vast array of subjects and the emphasis on the individual provide a rich mosaic of opportunities for the widely diverse group melded together into the category of "older adult." The public library's traditional mission of serving the independent learner has resulted in a service structure ideally suited to adult learners.

In summarizing his research on adult learners, Penland (1978, p. 6) noted that adults "often feel a strong need to establish the pace and control the character of their learning experiences." Most adults express a preference for independent learning over formalized courses for a number of reasons: pacing, learning style, flexibility and the ability to change,

control of structure, lack of classes, immediacy, time limitations, dislike of a classroom setting, expense, and transportation (Tough, 1979, p. 39). It appears that the very existence of opportunities for choice may in and of itself promote enhanced physical and mental well-being in older adults. "The negative consequences of aging may be retarded, reversed or possibly prevented by returning to the aged the right to make decisions and a feeling of competence" (Langer and Rodin, 1978).

The fundamental characteristics of the public library serve to underscore its suitability as an integral part of the learning society. The Commission on Non-Traditional Study found that "the public library should be strengthened to become a far more powerful instrument for nontraditional education than is now the case...It is a free institution where the individual has open access to great quantities of information. It exists in great numbers, possesses the materials of knowledge, has a public service staff, and is a referral point to other resources within the educational network"(Gould, 1978, pp. 82-83).

Public libraries offer a variety of access points and educational opportunities. The public library is the only major educational institution with a mission and tradition of providing learning opportunities throughout the entire human lifespan and is the most widely available institution that freely provides continuing education once the learner has completed secondary school. Supported by a multidisciplinary approach to lifelong learning, this mandate provides an opportunity for continuity, integration, and choice (Van Fleet, 1990).

Libraries are not necessarily new to older adult patrons. The public library frequently is an institution they have called on over the course of a lifetime and this familiarity provides security and a sense of stability. The transition to using the library for "older adult" services

should be virtually seamless.

The intergenerational focus of the public library fosters a sense of belonging to the community. Older adults are not isolated or peripheral. They continue to visit the same building and to avail themselves of the same services as other age groups.

Older adults in the public library setting may choose the learning approach with which they are most comfortable. Those who choose to learn independently and individually may do so; those who prefer programs, discussions, or group activities will also find opportunities. Older adult learners may choose to attend programs designed for a general adult audience, be part of intergenerational programs that bring older adults and young adults or children together, or participate in programs targeted primarily to older adults.

Public Library Services in Support of Lifelong Learners

Basic library services are designed to provide learning opportunities to diverse clientele with a variety of educational needs and learning preferences. They take the form of varied and organized library collections, reference and information services, programming, and outreach services. The extent and manner in which these are focused for older adults vary with community need and demand as well as awareness and expertise of local library staff. While some libraries have designated older adult specialists or outreach specialists, others choose a more integrated approach. Studies of library services to older adults indicate a wide variety of approaches and programs (Turock, 1990; Van Fleet, 1990, Wallace, 1990).

Acquisition and Organization of Materials

The public library is perhaps most widely recognized for collecting educational materials on a wide variety of subjects, written at a variety of levels, for a diverse clientele. For the most

part, areas of interest to older adults fall broadly within interest areas of the general adult population and, in many cases, there is little change in the individual's interests and learning patterns. It may be that different specific topics within given areas are of primary concern, and it is the responsibility of the librarian to ensure that these areas are represented in the collection.

The importance of extending appropriately selected and organized collections to the older adult community is delineated in section 2 of "Guidelines for Library Service to Older Adults," which states that librarians must "Promote information and resources on aging and its implications not only to older adults themselves but also to family members, professionals in the field of aging, and other persons interested in the aging process" (Library Services to an Aging Population Committee, 1987). While librarians will have a grounding in a variety of review and collection resources, they will need to include special focus tools such as Brazil's (1990) *Building Library Collections on Aging* to ensure adequate coverage.

Reference and Information Services

Reference librarians interpret questions, provide information to individual patrons and offer guidance in the use of the library and its resources. Reference librarians are familiar with the various literatures of a variety of disciplines and are astute at discovering links among disciplines to fully answer questions or to help guide an individual's independent learning activities. To provide excellence in service to older adult learners, they must constantly renew their knowledge of resources available and update and organize such aids as vertical files, bibliographies, and learning plans. Librarians who serve older adults scan popular journals such as *Modern Maturity* or *Mature Outlook* to keep current on topics and issues of interest to the older adult community. In addition, they collect, read, display, and organize for future

reference brochures and catalogs from such organizations as Elderhostel, the National Council on Aging, Inc. or local community groups.

An integral part of reference and information services is referral to appropriate agencies and institutions, and many libraries have developed community information databases in which they list directory and purpose statements for local agencies and organizations.

Some public libraries also provide the services of a reader's advisor. Although frequently focused on fiction guidance, advisors may also work with individual patrons to guide a course of study in nonfiction areas. Reader's advisors are aware of the diverse interests within the older adult population, and recognize that while some readers want sensitive novels about growing older or prefer an older adult as protagonist, many older adults will be more interested in genre, style, setting, or level of characterization than on whether or not the book is about or for an older adult. To properly serve older adult readers, librarians need to be familiar with such special topic bibliographies as *Of a Certain Age* (Rubin, 1990) or *Aging With Style and Savvy* (Donavin, 1990).

Programming

Programming for all age groups is a popular service in many libraries. These programs cover a wide variety of topics and have different purposes and expectations, and audiences will vary. Lecture programs may provide information on daily living topics from low fat cooking to investment information to family relationships. Elderhostel programs offer formal education activities in areas from jazz to botany. Book discussions stimulate intellectual activity and social interaction; reminiscence programming for older adults allows them to validate and analyze their experiences and sometimes share them with another generation, either through direct interaction

or through recording in print or on tape.

Programs are often the focus of interagency cooperation. For instance, the National Council on Aging, Inc. offered "Silver Editions," a library-based, scholar led humanities discussion program series. Funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the immensely successful programs brought together public libraries, university scholars, and local service providers (Liroff and Van Fleet, 1992).

For other programs, libraries draw from a wide spectrum of speakers representing community agencies, organizations, and businesses. Libraries may provide meeting room facilities for programs sponsored by these organizations, or may act as co-sponsors.

Outreach

Outreach involves planning services for individuals who may not be able to take advantage of in-library services or who have not traditionally done so. Typically, these services are provided to people who are institutionalized or homebound, and may take the form of deposit collections to the institution, delivery service of materials, programs, or books by mail. These services are specifically outlined in section 4 of the "Guidelines for Library Service to Older Adults," which requires librarians to "Provide library service appropriate to the special needs of older adults, including the minority who are geographically isolated, homebound, institutionalized, or disabled" (Library Services to an Aging Population Committee, 1987). It is an interesting quirk of library service that outreach services to older adults are visible, easily segmented, and widely reported, while basic, integrated service to the majority of older adult patrons who are fully functional and able to take advantage of the full spectrum of services is not well documented.

The term outreach is also sometimes used to include marketing and awareness activities. Under this umbrella, public librarians may take part in community sponsored interagency events, such as Senior Information Expositions or Community Health Fairs, in order to alert potential patrons and other service providers to the support available at the library.

Knowledge Necessary for Planning and Implementing Services

Library services have essentially the same goals for all patrons - to enrich leisure, to gather and disseminate information for effective living, and to provide for continued growth and learning throughout the lifespan. The specific manner in which these goals are fulfilled will vary according to community need and demand. The key is in ensuring that the needs of older adults are met while remembering that the range of needs and abilities is as great as for any other segment of the population. To provide effective service for older learners, the librarian will have a three-tiered knowledge base.

Core Knowledge of Library and Information Science

First, the librarian will have a thorough knowledge of the library and information science profession. The core knowledge areas include:

- intellectual freedom;
- evaluation, analysis, acquisition, retrieval and organization of information and materials, regardless of physical format;
- information seeking behaviors, use of information, learning patterns;
- interpersonal communications, interviewing patrons and interpreting needs of individuals, discourse analysis;
- methods, strategies, and resources for needs analysis;

- evaluation and analysis of materials and services;
- planning and management of library and information services.

Knowledge of Public Library Service

The second tier involves relating the core to public library service. A copy of the document "Expectations for Entry Level Public Librarians," (Education of Public Librarians Committee, 1995) is attached and provides a more detailed picture of the knowledge necessary for public librarians. The basic knowledge areas are summarized here:

- public library mission, role, and clientele;
- public administration, political context of the library in the community, and public finance;
- community needs analysis, information needs and library use by diverse constituencies;
- outreach services, referral services, collaborative and interagency services and programs;
- public relations and marketing, including development of bibliographies and other materials;
- lifelong learning theory, child and young adult development and learning patterns, adult education theory and techniques; and
- rationale, planning, resources and models for child and young adult services and adult services, including popular literature and reader's advisory.

Knowledge for Specialized Library Service to Older Adults

The most specialized area is in library services to older adults. In may cases, providing

services to older adults is a matter of awareness and focus. The basic service, whether collection development, reference, reader's advisory, or program planning, will usually be part of the library's normal core service. If the librarian has not developed an understanding of the need to adapt and focus these services, however, older adult patrons may not receive the level of service to which they are entitled. Without the opportunity to develop a knowledge of the older adult population, many librarians fall prey to the fallacy of the illness model of aging. That is, they equate services to older adults with services to people who are ill or who have disabilities. This may result in a high level of service to the minority of older adult patrons who are ill, homebound or institutionalized while the needs of the majority of older library users are overlooked or neglected. The Library Services to an Aging Population Committee (Reference and Adult Services Division, American Library Association) has developed "Guidelines for Library Service to Older Adults" (Attachment B). To meet the standards outlined in the document, the librarian's specialized knowledge will include:

- demographics and diversity of the older adult population;
- information needs of older adults, families, friends, and caregivers;
- learning abilities and styles of older adults;
- options and resources for provision of library services; community context, including community agencies and others who provide services of interest to older adults; and
- techniques and strategies for adapting materials and services for older adults with disabilities.

Note that American Library Association guidelines require a thorough knowledge of the local

community and its resources in addition to the more universal concepts of library and information science, education, and the older adult population.

Essentially, the library and information science professional must provide information services to a specialized group in a highly political environment. Ideally, the knowledge necessary to provide effective services can be gained through current structures for educating service professionals and disseminating information.

Problems And Knowledge Gaps

There are, unfortunately, weaknesses in the structures of formal education, continuing education, and dissemination mechanisms, as there are gaps in the knowledge base that serves as the foundation for lifelong learning. These are discussed below, together with recommendations for consideration by the National Institute on Postsecondary Education, Libraries, and Lifelong Learning, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Problem: Structure and Incentives in Formal Education

The Master of Library and Information Science is the minimum credential for a professional librarian. The course of study for the degree is usually thirty-six hours in length. The programs are offered by Schools of Library and Information Science, or in departments of library and information science usually housed in schools of education, communications, or information studies.

There are significant barriers to beginning professionals obtaining in the thirty-six hour MLIS programthe three tiered level of specialization necessary for most effective service to older adults. The program is relatively short, incentive for specialization is minimal, and opportunities for interdisciplinary study are limited. Although some programs have attempted to expand the

number of hours required, economic conditions mitigate against a longer program. Salaries are not high enough to justify a greater investment in the beginning degree. Nationally, pressures in higher education in general are moving colleges and universities to shorten or restrict the number of hours required for degrees.

Because there is little demand for entry level "older adult" specialists in libraries, students are reluctant to specialize to any significant degree. Information on older adults must be integrated into more general courses and may not receive the attention and frequent updating necessary. With university administrations evaluating programs on numeric measures (cost per student credit hour produced), there may be little incentive for MLIS programs to offer electives that may draw fewer students.

Additionally, there are few mechanisms to encourage the multidisciplinary approach from which older adults and the professionals who provide their educational resources might benefit. It is difficult for students attempting to pursue a well-rounded curriculum in library and information science to fit outside courses into their programs.

Recommendations: Structure and Incentives in Formal Education

- Support current fellowship mechanisms such as HEA Title IIB Library Education and Human Resource Development Program that support specialization in services to older adults. Consider giving preference to proposals that offer an interdisciplinary curriculum, internships with a variety of community agencies that provide educational services to older adults, or supporting dual degrees.
- Support the formation of interdepartmental institutes on aging that emphasize not only interdisciplinary research among faculty, but innovative and interdisciplinary curricula

for students.

Problem: Mechanisms for Continuing Education

While librarians may recognize the need for knowledge about the older adult community, continuing education opportunities are often scattered and piecemeal.

Recommendations: Mechanisms for Continuing Education

- Support a sabbatical program similar to those offered to school teachers to public librarians.
- Support institutes such as those funded by the HEA Title IIB Library Education and Human Resource Development Program to support specialization in educational services to older adults. Give priority to proposals that bring together local practitioners from various professions as participants and speakers and scholars and researchers from different disciplines as speakers and facilitators.
- Create a speakers bureau or training module on lifelong learning and aging and make speakers and training materials available at low cost to local groups through state libraries, schools of library and information science, or state councils on aging, or through national and state professional organizations.

Problem: Literature and Dissemination of Information

Literature about research and applications in the area of learning opportunities for older adults is not easily accessible. It tends to be scattered among disciplines, indexing terms and key words may vary, and the research literature of one discipline may be too technical for professionals of another. Some of the literature is available only in report form, proceedings, or other formats that are not readily available due to lack of indexing or production limitations.

While older adults and those who work with them in their learning projects may find meaningful information in popular periodicals, professional journals, electronic resources, and in reports and brochures from a number of different organizations, finding information directly relevant to services for older learners may largely be a matter of serendipity.

Recommendations: Literature and Dissemination of Information

- Support research on effective strategies for information retrieval of topics with multidisciplinary aspects.
- Establish and support an information clearinghouse on aging. Scan literature in a variety of disciplines on a regular basis. Provide print and electronic newsletters or abstracting service at a modest cost to library and information centers. Use public libraries as depositories for print information and access points for electronic resources.
- Work with other government agencies to make information pertinent to older adult services available, both intellectually, bibliographically, and physically, to older adults and service providers.

Problem: Duplication of Effort

In some communities, because service providers may lack awareness of existing research and models or the efforts of other organizations within the community, programs are continuously reinvented. At least two state libraries have developed manuals for providing services to older adults, although there exists an excellent LSCA (Library Services and Construction Act) funded manual developed for the State Library of California (Rubin and McGovern, 1988). This duplication of effort absorbs time, effort, and resources.

Recommendations: Duplication of Effort

- Support programs of other governmental and quasi-governmental agencies, such as the National Council on Aging and the National Endowment for the Humanities that develop educational programs that are offered in selected public libraries nationwide, often in cooperation with other area agencies. Expand these programs beyond the selected sites by supporting development of program modules and materials that are widely available at low cost.
- Provide grants to local libraries to purchase educational materials geared to older adult learners. Items such as Bi-Folkal Kits, designed for reminiscence programming with older adults, can be adapted to serve audiences with very diverse skills, educational levels, and educational goals, but can be expensive if each senior center, nursing home, retirement community and library attempts to purchase them. Criteria for grants should include effectiveness of plans for using kits, cooperative programming, and circulation of kits to community agencies.

Problem: Competition for Resources

Frequently, although librarians intuitively feel the "rightness" of service to older learners, they lack empirical evidence of the tangible benefits of their services. They may thus have difficulty in justifying cost of services to funding bodies, establishing older adult services as a priority within the library, setting goals and evaluating services, or even explaining to older adults, family members, or caregivers the value of their participation.

Recommendations: Competition for Resources

- Synthesize statistics, research findings, evidence of impact in a factsheet for use by older

adults, agency administrators, and other advocates of lifelong learning opportunities.

- Develop a national public awareness campaign on lifelong learning - for everyone.
- Ensure that public libraries and relevant community agencies are included as providers in all education legislation.
- Develop a research agenda as a first step. Disseminate not only the agenda and requests for proposals, but establish a mechanism (newsletter, abstract, bibliography) for informing service professionals of results. Scan research agendas of other agencies for overlap and possibilities for cooperative efforts or opportunities to compare and synthesize findings. Report research relevant to the OERI agenda whether or not the research has been supported or produced by the office.

Suggested Areas of Research

The suggestions made for areas of research and recommendations to the Office of Educational Research and Improvement are developed to enhance lifelong learning opportunities for older adults. They are designed with several constituencies in mind: older adults and their friends and families, so that they may be informed decision makers; professionals in the area of older adult services, so that they may provide more effective services; and administrators, so they may be more powerful advocates. These areas of research may be divided into three sections: information for advocacy; structures and mechanisms for education and knowledge dissemination to service providers; specific strategies and methods for planning and providing educational services to older learners.

Research: Advocacy

Educational opportunities for older adults often receive lower priority than those for other

learners. This is perhaps a symptom of the stereotypical thinking that considers older adults passive recipients of services who are biding time until death. Until the impact of the older adult population on society in general is made clear, providing services for older learners will continue to be viewed as a humanitarian act to be undertaken when there are "extra" resources available. Suggested topics for research are listed.

- *Economic impact of older adults and services to older adults*. The most common statistic we hear is that two of every five dollars spent by the federal government are spent on behalf of older adults, not a figure designed to underscore the contribution of older adults to the economy. Research is needed on the impact of older adult consumers, many of whom have more discretionary income than at any other time in their lives. A current trend appears to be attracting retirees to communities. What is the economic impact? What services help to attract older adults to an area? More emphasis should be placed on the productivity of older adults. What is the economic value of contributions of older adult workers, both paid and volunteer? Older adults are not always recipients of care. How many older adults act as caregivers to others - whether aged parents, friends or spouses, or grandchildren - and what is the value of these services?
- *Physical impact of lifelong learning opportunities for older adults; secondary effects on families, caregivers, and service providers.* Preliminary research indicates that leisure reading and continued learning may have a significant physical effect (Nell, 1988). These general health studies should be extended. More recently, studies suggest that intellectual activity may result in an actual physical regeneration of brain tissue. If these physical effects can be verified, what is the impact on older adults and their abilities, on

the need for long term medical care, and on well-being and productivity of families and caregivers?

- *Cognitive impact of lifelong learning opportunities for older adults; secondary effects on families, caregivers, and service providers.* Do learning activities enhance and extend cognitive abilities? What type of activities are most effective? Does enhanced ability extend to all types of reasoning and activity - everyday functioning and decision-making as well as performance on similar activities? What are the implications for independent living and productivity, and what is the impact on those associated with older adults?
- *Social/psychological impact of lifelong learning opportunities for older adults; secondary effects on families, caregivers, and service providers.* There is some evidence that participation in lifelong learning activities creates a sense of well-being and control. Extended studies should explore the psychological effects of a pattern of lifelong learning activity. Do those who engage in such activities seem more or less anxious, more or less integrated, more or less independent? Do they engage in more or fewer hobbies, social activities, work or volunteer activities? What is the impact on the people with whom they work and interact?

Research: Structures and Mechanisms for Education and Knowledge Dissemination to Service Providers

Education and training of service professionals will have a substantial impact on the quality of learning opportunities afforded to older adults. Dissemination of knowledge on a continuous basis will improve services as providers update skills and use existing research to establish a research/practice heuristic. The following areas should be addressed.

- *Effectiveness of different models of professional education, both formal academic programs and continuing education programs.* As indicated above, the quality of educational opportunities for older learners is dependent on the expertise and commitment of service professionals who are charged with the responsibility for planning and implementing programs. Evaluation of formal and continuing education programs will assist the Office in developing criteria for proposals for support and extend the benefit by providing planning information for professional educators.
- *Models for organizing and disseminating mulit-disciplinary information to diverse groups, including older adults, families, caregivers, and an array of service providers.* A great deal of valuable information exists but much of it is inaccessible to scholars, researchers, service professionals, and older adults who might benefit from it. The need for effective use of research money argues for developing, organizing, and disseminating existing information as a foundation for program development as well as a springboard for new research.

Research: Strategies and Methods for Planning and Providing Educational Services to Older Learners

Planners must be provided results of research that can be applied in a practical manner to provide direct service. Such information is essential for goal setting and evaluation as well as for strengthening commitment to quality service. These research areas might include:

- *Effects of various media on physical, cognitive, social, and psychological development in older adults.* Do different media affect adult learners in different ways? Do they encourage adults to be more receptive or more expressive, more passive or more active?

Are the media that seem to be most effect the ones that older learners prefer? Although there is some preliminary research on older adult learners and various media, much of it is older and application of the findings to the changing older adult population and the new media environment is questionable. What are the implications of these findings for producers and publishers and for librarians and other education providers?

- *Level and duration of programs necessary to have an impact on development in older adults.* Given that some research indicates positive and dramatic results from participation in learning activities, is there a minimal level and duration of services necessary to produce these effects? The number and frequency of meetings in a given program series appears to be based primarily on rule of thumb and convenience. Knowing what to expect can help older adults and planners set goals and plan effectively.
- *Effectiveness of delivery mechanisms and strategies.* There are a variety of formats for providing educational opportunities for adult learners. As noted, libraries offer a full range of services, from providing collections for self-planned, independent learning to referral to formal education agencies to program series. Program formats vary from one time presentations to long-running weekly series. Some involve a presentation, some are based on interactive discussion, and some revolve around activities. Programs may be self-contained or require outside preparation on the part of the learner. Are some of these formats more effective than others? Does the very act of choice among these have a positive impact? In many cases, the decision may be whether to take the program to residents of retirement complexes or nursing homes or to bring residents to the library. Some research in early childhood education indicates that children receive the greatest

benefit by traveling from school to in-library programs. The change of venue somehow enhances and reinforces the learning experience. Might we see these effects with other age populations as well?

- *Models for effective collaborative or single agency services to older adults.* There is a vast amount of experience and expertise in developing collaborative programs, yet many local service providers are unaware of the activities of others. Consequently, they may duplicate efforts in developing programs, may not offer a full range of programs, and may give up a valuable argument for obtaining resources for programming. For instance, the Ascension Parish (Louisiana) Public Library provides an activity sheet, such as word match or crossword puzzle in large print, that is delivered by Meals on Wheels couriers. A simple and effective project, it was not introduced until instituted by a new librarian with previous experience at another library. A report that describes successful models and analyzes the conceptual and practical reasons for success would be invaluable.

- *Relative advantages and disadvantages of intergenerational programming.* Intergenerational programming is a topic of much debate in public libraries. For all of the arguments on the benefits of integrating different age groups and encouraging interaction, there are counterarguments (sometimes from patrons themselves) who dislike being around children or who do not enjoy discussion sessions with middle aged adults, or who simply prefer opportunities to be with others their own age. Some see the pairing of older adults and children as perpetuating the sterotyping of the aging as entering a second childhood. Are there distinct advantages of one approach over the

other? Should they coexist, offering the widest scope of choice to accommodate individual choice?

- *Use of older adult materials; impact on cost effectiveness of service provision.* Providing materials focused on the needs of older adults or formats designed to accommodate older adults with some measure of disability may sometimes be perceived as expensive services in public libraries. An analysis of use of these materials, taking into account use by other age groups, will give truer cost/benefit picture and enhance services for all patrons. For instance, large print books may be used by people with visual impairments regardless of age. They may also be used by new readers. Some readers find large print books a faster read because they scan very easily. Some materials designed specifically for older adults can be used for other age groups as well, as a World War II reminiscence kit may be used to give secondary school students a better idea of the culture and issues of the time.

Conclusion

This paper has presented an overview of the public library, an agency with a tradition of linking lifelong learners and educational resources, and offered perceptions of barriers to effective service, together with recommendations for addressing specific problems and knowledge gaps. Whatever research topics and recommendations are accepted as a result of this conference, studying and planning lifelong learning opportunities will benefit by incorporating the following basic approaches.

- The approach to research and education should be *multidisicplinary*, viewing the learner in a holistic manner and taking into account physical, psychological, sociological, emotional,

economic, and political impacts and their interactions as well as educational goals. This should be reflected in interagency involvement in planning and providing community- based education for lifelong learners.

- The approach should stress *continuity*, recognizing that aging and development are processes that take place throughout the lifespan. Not only do those individuals classified as older adults continue to change and develop, the patterns of learning and changing have been established much earlier. Additionally, the move into the older adult population is not a radical new phase, but is fluid and continuous.

- The approach should underscore *interrelatedness* of all segments of the community. Perceptions of older adults may well affect not only older adults, their families and friends, and caregivers (the entire spectrum of those in the older adult community), but self-perception, worldview, and actions of children and other adults.

- The approach should be *inclusive*. There is great diversity within the older adult population, and programs and services should be planned with attention to all segments. Agencies that focus only on services for nursing home residents or older adults with disabilities will neglect the 95% of older adults who live independently. Research findings should be synthesized and applied and service models should be developed with flexibility and creativity.

- The approach should emphasize *access to information* and findings. A great deal of relevant information is not readily accessible, either directly to older adults or to service professionals. The approach should provide the dual focus of making available what is known and discovering new knowledge.

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EXPECTATIONS FOR ENTRY LEVEL PUBLIC LIBRARIANS

Public Library Assocation
Education of Public Librarians Committee
January 1995

INTRODUCTION

This statement of *Expectations for Entry Level Public Librarians* is the response of the Public Library Association to the Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library & Information Studies 1992, which require that the program objectives of an accredited master's program educating future information professionals include "appropriate principles of specialization identified in applicable policy statements and documents of relevant professional organizations." The curriculum of the program, if it includes "study of services and activities in specialized fields," must take "into account the statements of knowledge and competencies developed by relevant professional organizations."[1]

The development of this statement was undertaken at the 1992 ALA Midwinter Meeting by the PLA Education of Public Librarians Committee. Work began with examination by the Committee of similar documents from ALA units and other professional associations as well as related articles discussing what entry level public librarians should know and documents from public libraries that dealt with the topic. Following several rounds of revisions of the statement, a draft was presented to the association's constituencies for discussion and suggestions at the 1994 PLA National Conference and in the March/April 1994 issue of *Public Libraries* (pp. 81-91). Final revisions were made to the draft at the 1994 ALA Annual Conference, and it was submitted to the PLA Board for approval at the 1995 ALA Midwinter Meeting.

The statement is addressed to three audiences:

- **the entry-level librarian,** to whom the statement communicates the expectations of the individual public library regarding knowledge, skills, and abilities for entry-level positions.
- **library and information studies (LIS) education,** for which the statement suggests curriculum implications for the graduate LIS programs.
- **public library management,** to whom the statement conveys the implications for staff development, i.e., what the entry level librarian should be able to expect in the way of professional development.

The purpose of the statement is to offer assistance to LIS schools as they review and revise their curricula for the preparation of public librarians, to suggest to currently enrolled students what they will need to know in their first position, and to encourage public libraries to provide for the continued development and growth of new entrants to the field. The categories used in the document are not intended to be interpreted as discrete elements but as integral parts of a whole.

For continued utility, the statement will need regular review and revision by the appropriate PLA unit and ongoing dialogue with the three audiences to whom the statement is addressed.

[1]American Library Association, Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library & Information Studies (Chicago: American Library Association Office for Accreditation, 1992), pp. 9, 12.

ENTRY LEVEL PUBLIC LIBRARIAN KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ATTITUDES	IMPLICATIONS FOR LIBRARY AND INFORMATION STUDIES EDUCATION	LIBRARY RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
1. Foundations and basic understandings		
a. Knowledge of and ability to interact with the library's community. Knowledge of the legal, structural, and regulatory environment of the public library.	*a.(1a)* Study of community structures; study of local, state, and federal structures and regulations and interfaces applicable to public library, e.g. state library law, LSCA, ADA. *a.(1b)* Study of the development, implementation, and evaluation of public policy mechanisms.	*a.(2a)* Furnish information on the profile of the specific community served, as well as an in-depth orientation to the specific community and knowledge of ways in which library relates to the community. Give information on the library's programs related to LSCA.
b. Knowledge of the mission and roles of the public library and how they differ from the various missions and roles applicable to other kinds of libraries.	*b.(1a)* Study of public libraries in terms of communities served, urban, suburban, and rural, industrial, educational and residential, area and size, particularly in the context of a library system. *b.(1b)* Study of the uniqueness of the mission of public libraries, taught by professors with substantial ongoing interaction with public libraries.	*b.(2a)* Provide structural orientation to the entire library system, its mission and role, and the appropriate policies and procedures, rules and regulations.
c. Understanding of the extensive public contact required in public library service.	*c.(1a)* Opportunities for practica that put student in contact with public library clientele.	*c.(2a)* Facilitate direct exposure to the public as early as feasible in new public librarian's career.
d. Ability to serve at appropriate levels the culturally diverse clientele of the public, including understanding of this clientele and a commitment to serve all people.	*d.(1a)* Emphasis on the degree to which responsibilities in public libraries are determined by community needs and wants, as established through community interaction. *d.(1b)* Identification and understanding of multiculturalism. *d.(1c)* Development of, commitment to and expertise in providing information and resources that reflect the diversity of human experiences and promote understanding of all people.	*d.(2a)* Provide a variety of experiences in serving the various clientele of the library. *d.(2b)* Give opportunity to further develop cultural sensitivity toward and knowledge of the clientele served. *d.(2c)* Allow time and opportunity to further develop familiarity with the specific resources needed to serve the diverse clientele, such as community information resource files.

2. Organization of knowledge		
a. Knowledge of how all types of materials are selected and acquired.	*a.(1a)* Study of the information industry, distribution of all types and formats of materials, function of vendors, libraries' selection and acquisition process.	*a.(2a)* Inculcate personnel in the library's selection and acquisition policies and mechanisms.
b. Comprehension of how all types of materials are organized in the library to facilitate access and use.	*b.(1a)* Instruction in principles of cataloging and classification and indexing.	*b.(2a)* Orient librarians to the specific systems and procedures within the library by which materials are organized and accessed.
3. Information resources development and management		
a. Ability to identify the appropriate review media for selecting materials for assigned area of responsibility.	*a.(1a)* Inclusion of an overview of the variety of review media available for materials pertinent to the wide range of community and lifestyle-interests.	*b.(2a)* Provide wide-ranging review media, other sources of information appropriate to the library's community, and knowledge of how review media are used locally to build collections.
b. Abilty to use various literatures in a variety of disciplines and formats.	*b.(1a)* Appropriate admission requirements that will ensure basic grounding in a variety of disciplinary areas. *b.(1b)* Adequate guidance in degree program development that recognizes the need to be conversant in the information behavior/communication systems in the various disciplines.	*b.(2a)* Offer opportunity to work with differing types of materials and disciplines. *b.(2b)* Allow for ongoing opportunity to expand knowledge/keep current in various types of resources.
c. Ability to use review media, participate in selection of materials and information access, weeding and upkeep.	*c.(1a)* Study of the criteria of selection and the principles of collection development, management, and maintenance.	*c.(2a)* Furnish opportunity to participate in selection and to serve on selection committees. Provide opportunity to review new books and other media where needed.
d. Capacity to develop and maintain community information resource files.	*d.(1a)* Inclusion of community information concepts and practices as components in the curriculum.	*d.(2a)* Give thorough orientation to local community information resource files and experience in information gathering and outreach.
4. User services and programming		
a. Understanding of the role of services and programming as a mechanism for the delivery of information.	*a.(1a)* Introduction of students to the types of services and programming in public libraries.	*a.(2a)* Instruct new librarians in the library's services and programming, types and scheduling, and the structure through which coordination is effected. *a.(2b)* Foster early exposure to programming public and information services.

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b. Ability to design and implement programs and services for specified clientele.	*b.(1a)* Study of different clienteles served by public libraries as well as the types of services most appropriate for those clienteles. Opportunity to design specific programs or services.	*b.(2a)* Provide a variety of experiences in services and programming, training and guidance including mentoring and workshops.
c. Understanding of marketing and the ability to design and implement a public relations program.	*c.(1a)* Analysis of philosophy and techniques of marketing and public relations within the context of library and information services offered by public libraries.	*c.(2a)* Offer continuing education and experience in marketing and public relations.
d. Ability to use current models of reference service.	*d.(1a)* Study of the nature of quality control for all types of libraries, including models for services within libraries. *d.(1b)* Provision of knowledge of planning processes developed for public libraries at the national and state levels.	*d.(2a)* Insure early exposure to the planning processes utilized in public libraries.
e. Capability to define what the client is seeking and to retrieve information pertinent to the client's needs in a timely fashion.	*e.(1a)* Provision of understanding of the dynamics of the reference and reader's advisory interchanges. *e.(1b)* Development of understanding of the different ways people seek information in a library.	*e.(2a)* Implement mentoring program to refine ability to provide information to clients. *e.(2b)* Train new librarians in a variety of assessment techniques that measure success in satisfying client needs.
f. Ability to find, retrieve, use, and make available to clients information in whatever format needed, wherever located, in all communication channels, including knowledge of and ability to use computer-based information resources.	*f.(1a)* Examination of communication theory, information storage and retrieval models, and commonly used print and non-print media. *f.(1b)* Provision of opportunity to have adequate knowledge of frequently used computer-based information resources, including hands-on experience.	*f.(2a)* Provide orientation to the resources used by the specific library to answer clients' information needs. *f.(2b)* Develop competency with library held, computer-based information resources.
5. Technology		
a. Basic understanding of terminology and concepts of information transfer technology and ability to continue development of learning in this area.	*a.(1a)* Affording of opportunities to interact with a wide range of applicable technologies.	*a.(2a)* Enhance learning opportunities in the area of information transfer technology both within the library through on-the-job training and outside the library through attendance at conferences and workshops.
b. Knowledge of electronic networks and networking.	*b.(1a)* Study of network models; use of illustrative ones, such as Internet.	*b.(2a)* Train new librarians in electronic networks used and the uses to which they are put.

c. Knowledge of computer applications in the public library environment.	*c.(1a)* Updating of curriculum to keep it abreast of current changes in technology applicable to meeting information needs.	*c.(2a)* Incorporate learning opportunities for librarians to become familiar with existing resources, as well as new technology and technical applications as they are adopted.
6. Administration and management		
a. Understanding of the processes by which public libraries and governed and funded.	*a.(1a)* Study of the organization and governance of public libraries.	*a.(2a)* Furnish orientation in the specific governmental organization under which a given public library operates.
b. Ability to work with others in a team approach. Ability to work alone or in teams.	*b.(1a)* Use of a variety of learning methodologies, including team experience.	*b.(2a)* Provide membership on committees. *b.(2b)* Stress the principle of a team approach to problem solving within the library environment and recognize the value of individual contributions. *b.(2c)* Contribute positive feedback on a regular basis.
c. Ability to apply management principles.	*c.(1a)* Incorporation of general principles of management and personnel administration in the curriculum.	*c.(2a)* Groom staff for management as appropriate; involve all staff in planning.
d. Awareness of fiscal implications of decisions taken.	*d.(1a)* Instruction in principles of financial management.	*d.(2a)* Supervise employees in costing functions they perform; orient to budget preparation.
7. Planning and evaluation		
a. Ability to articulate and identify problems.	*a.(1a)* Adherence to critical approach to learning.	*a.(2a)* Encourage supervisors to challenge new employees to identify and articulate problems. *a.(2b)* Reward thoughtful questioning of practice; explain why things are done.
b. Ability to use appropriate techniques and methodologies for identifying needs, problem solving, planning, and evaluating services.	*b.(1a)* Introduction to principles of planning, evaluation, and research, including community analysis.	*b.(2a)* Allow time and opportunities to be involved in planning and evaluation procedures within the library. *b.(2b)* Afford time and opportunities to review the literature as relates to the job.
c. Skill in collecting and analyzing data for decision making.	*c.(1a)* Basic grounding in analytical methodologies.	*c.(2a)* Urge new employees to offer factual basis for recommendations, to gather and interpret data on the job.

8. Professional and ethical responsibilities		
a. Professional development; self-assessment of professional expertise and conduct, current awareness of trends.	*a.(1a)* Highlighting of current trends. Defining and discussion of profession\professionalism.	*a.(2a)* Develop an interactive performance plan. *a.(2b)* Encourage development of a personal plan for professional growth.
b. Commitment to and understanding of principles of intellectual freedom.	*b.(1a)* Introduction to a variety of documents, policies, and procedures that support intellectual freedom. *b.(1b)* Grounding in intellectual freedom issues and the complexities of decisions in this area in a culturally diverse and technological society.	*b.(2a)* Prepare to back librarians in an intellectual freedom fight, with policies and procedures in place; provide orientation to these policies and procedures.
c. Highly developed sense of professionalism and ethical conduct.	*c.(1a)* Attention to the development of ethical behavior, including the electronic environment. Study of professional codes of ethics and surrounding discussions.	*c.(2a)* Furnish orientation and training in policies and procedures of the specific library as related to ethical conduct. *f.(2b)* Provide a forum for discussion of these issues.
d. Ongoing commitment to continuing education and participation in professional development activities.	*d.(1a)* Provision of CE opportunities.	*d.(2a)* Support staff attendance at CE programs. *d.(2b)* Provide means for the attendee to share CE learning in the workplace.
e. Commitment to participation in professional organizations.	*e.(1a)* Introduction to professional organizations and discussion of their role in professional growth.	*e.(2a)* Support staff attendance at professional meetings and recognize involvement.

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Guidelines for Library Service to Older Adults

Prepared by the Library Services to an Aging Population Committee, Reference and Adult Services Division, American Library Association. Adopted by the Reference and Adult Services Division Board of Directors, January 1987. (Supersedes "Guidelines for Library Services to an Aging Population," July 1975)

INTRODUCTION

The importance of library services to meet the particular needs of older adults increases along with this group's numbers. These guidelines suggest means whereby librarians can meet those needs.

1. Exhibit and promote a positive attitude toward the aging process and older adults.

1.1 Actively seek to improve communication skills with people of all ages.

1.2 Educate its administrators, librarians, and library staff regarding physiological, psychological, social, and cultural development of people throughout the lifespan.

1.3 Participate in continuing education which will enhance skills in working with older adults.

1.4 Avoid labeling and look beyond the stereotypes and mythologies of aging.

1.5 Exhibit the same level of interest, comfort, and respect with older adults as with any other patrons.

2. Promote information and resources on aging and its implications not only to older adults themselves but also to family members, professionals in the field of aging, and other persons interested in the aging process.

2.1 Assess the information needs of the older population in order to build a collection which meets the real needs of:
- a. people interested in understanding the aging process;
- b. people planning for a change in lifestyle or employment;
- c. individuals who act as advocates for the aging;
- d. service providers; and
- e. younger people learning about the potential for growth over the lifespan.

2.2 Assure that library selection and weeding policies lead to the acquisition of current and useful materials which reflect diverse formats and information needs. Collection development should include information on:
- a. lifelong learning;
- b. older adults as consumers of aging services;
- c. behavioral implications;
- d. cultural, ethnic, economic, and regional differences;
- e. leisure time activities; and
- f. issues raised by the rapid aging of our society

2.3 Locate sources of appropriate materials including large print books, pamphlets, and audiovisual materials (e.g., talking books, tapes, films, videotapes, etc.) which are available for purchase, for loan, or at no cost.

2.4 Survey the existing gerontological resources within the community and make available the materials or information about them.

2.5 Organize information on community agencies, activities, and resources for use by older adults and those who work with them.

2.6 Provide ready access to an information and referral service which includes current information on:
- a. human services agencies serving older adults;
- b. speakers, reviewers, and other resource people available for programming; and
- c. publications, reports, community population profiles, funding agencies, and other research sources.

2.7 Publicize the availability of resources by:
- a. providing reading lists, advertisements, and exhibits of interest to the publics identified above;
- b. introducing the materials, demonstrating their use or co-sponsoring with other agencies and organizations, discussion series and programs at the library or in the community;
- c. mailing informative brochures to club presidents, committee chairpersons, interested individuals, and concerned agencies and organizations; and
- d. attending meetings, giving presentations, and working actively towards community involvement.

3. Assure services for older adults which reflect cultural, ethnic and economic differences.

3.1 Become knowledgeable about the cultural, ethnic, and economic composition of the community.

3.2 Use this information to purchase materials and arrange service, to train staff, to conduct programs, and to develop and maintain interagency cooperation.

3.3 Actively participate with existing agencies to serve the literacy needs of the older population.

4. Provide library service appropriate to the special needs of all older adults, including the minority who are geographically isolated, homebound, institutionalized, or disabled.

4.1 Provide trained staff to serve older adults.

4.2 Provide special materials such as talking books or large print books and periodicals.

4.3 Provide special equipment such as tape recorders, magnifying devices, page turners, reading machines, etc., to help in the reading process.

4.4 Identify the homebound or institutionalized who are in need of library service.

4.5 Provide personalized library service to meet the special needs of the individual within the institution (i.e., bed-to-bed, etc.) or the home.

4.6 Cooperate with the institutional administration in the planning and implementation of library services for the institutionalized.

4.7 Provide on-site service to the homebound and institutionalized, with training and transportation provided by the library.

5. Utilize the potential of older adults (paid or volunteer) as liaisons to reach their peers and as a resource in intergenerational programming.

5.1 Develop and implement well-organized training sessions for the individuals carrying out the library program.

5.2 Invite staff (including volunteers) to participate in library staff meetings so that they can be kept current about resources and policies.

5.3 Work closely with staff to solicit ideas, ensure a meaningful work experience, and provide as much autonomy as is desirable.

6. Employ older adults at both professional and support levels for either general library work or for programs specifically targeted to older adults.

6.1 Make certain that older adults are given serious consideration as candidates for either professional or support staff positions as available.

6.2 Request volunteer help only when funding is not available for paid positions.

7. Involve older adults in the planning and design of library services and programs for the entire community and for older adults in particular.

7.1 Identify representative older adults in the community to participate in library planning.

7.2 Assure that adequate needs assessment is conducted to represent the needs and interests of the older adults of the community.

7.3 Actively plan and implement programming to meet the needs identified.

8. Promote and develop working relationships with other agencies and groups connected with the needs of older adults.

8.1 Identify agencies, organizations, and groups in the community which are interested in older adults. Confer with agency leadership about ways in which the library can contribute to the achievement of their goals and objectives through:
- a. providing resources, materials, and services for older adults and for professional and lay workers in the field;
- b. cooperating in programming, service delivery, and in-service training; and
- c. involving key persons in cooperative library and interagency planning.

8.2 Identify organizations of older adults in the community and involve them in the planning and delivery of services.

8.3 Enlist participation of area librarians in developing cooperative collection development, and in developing services, programs, continuing education and staff training to improve library service to older adults.

8.4 Work toward comprehensive cooperative planning for older adults by:
- a. working with educational institutions to promote lifelong learning opportunities for older adults;
- b. locating and working with pre-retirement groups sponsored by business, industry, and other agencies

c. coordinating with other agencies to eliminate unnecessary duplication of services;
d. making available a list of community resources for information and referral which would then be available to older adults and the agencies which serve them; and
e. asking that professional staff and administration keep abreast of current developments in gerontology and geriatrics regionally and nationally so that informed interagency communication can be facilitated.

9. Provide programs, services, and information for those preparing for retirement or later-life career alternatives.

9.1 Develop a collection of materials and information on pre-retirement planning, retirement, and career alternatives, and provide bibliographies on these topics.
9.2 Cooperate with other community agencies to provide workshops, programs, and seminars on such topics as pre-retirement planning, retirement, and career alternatives.
9.3 Serve as a clearinghouse for information on retirement, alternate employment, and other career opportunities.

10. Facilitate library use by older persons through improved library design and access to transportation.

10.1 Make sure that both the collection and meeting rooms are physically accessible to older adults, with special regard for the impaired elderly, by providing as necessary ramps, hand bars, and other design features.
10.2 Provide or be knowledgeable about the availability of assistive devices such as audio loops, infrared listening systems, etc.
10.3 Provide furniture for use with wheelchairs.
10.4 Strategically locate large-print signage, including informational and safety guides.
10.5 Inform or assist older adults in securing transportation by utilizing public or volunteer transportation, new or existing van services, or dial-a-ride systems.
10.6 Seek and secure funding for any of the above.

11. Incorporate as part of the library's planning and evaluation process the changing needs of an aging population.

11.1 Conduct periodic needs assessments to determine whether library resources and programs are satisfying the changing needs of older adults.
11.2 Use the results of the needs assessments and continuing evaluation of current programs and services to assist with planning.

12. Aggressively seek sources of funding, and commit a portion of the library budget to programs and services for older adults.

12.1 Use these funds to acquire resources, assign or recruit staff, promote services, conduct staff development, and forge inter-agency cooperation.
12.2 Pursue sources of additional funds in order to provide for special or one-time-only projects. ■■

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Aging: A Guide to Resources. Ed. by John B. Balkema. Syracuse: Gaylord Professional Publications, in association with Neal-Schuman, 1983.

Reference tools for librarians, such as directories, bibliographies, statistical tables, and handbooks, and working tools for social gerontologists and students, such as manuals, outlines, and guides, are included in this annotated bibliography of books, pamphlets, and journal articles. The classified arrangement follows that of the National Council on Aging Library's verticle file, and indexing is by name and subject.

Casey, Genevieve M. *Library Services for the Aging*. Hamden, Conn.: Library Professional Publications, 1984.

Discussions of U.S. demographics, the intellectual abilities of the elderly, and educational opportunities for senior citizens lead into chapters on current trends in library services for the elderly, information resources for both the aging and researchers in the field of aging, and the professional education of librarians. A chapter on program planning for public librarians and an annotated bibliography of library service to the aging round out this work.

Monroe, Margaret E., and Rhea Joyce Rubin. *The Challenge of Aging: A Bibliography*. Littleton, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, 1983.

Nontechnical works, including creative literature, comprise this fully annotated list on aging. Organized according to an outline of "life-tasks" and indexed by author-title and subject, it is intended for individual readers, librarians serving them, social gerontologists working with groups, and senior-center activities directors. Materials available in nonprint format are noted.

Turock, Betty J. *Serving the Older Adult: A Guide to Library Programs and Information Sources*. New York: Bowker, 1982.

Various types of service programs and delivery systems are explored in this practical work. Also covered are a history of relevant legislation; demographics; theories of aging, program planning, and management; and the all-important funding issues. A valuable reference/collection development section offers an annotated core collection on aging; lists of fiction and nonfiction works, periodicals, and films about aging; and a selective directory of organizations and associations involved in the aging network.

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